
IDRP Working Paper No. 4

Internal Displacement in the Middle East: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

This paper reviews the limited range of existing scholarship on internal displacement in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This focuses mainly on internal displacement in specific MENA region countries affected by conflict, and the responses to that phenomenon at the national level. The paper starts by describing the main internal displacement trends across the MENA region with focus on the following countries: Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan. It then reviews how scholarship on internal displacement in MENA region has developed, respectively, in the fields social sciences, arts and humanities; law and policy; and public health and medicine. It ends by offering conclusions on the scope of existing research and directions for future study.

This review of the scholarly literature seeks to identify principal trends, gaps and opportunities relating to research on internal displacement. Towards this end, the review concentrates on academic publications, including monographs, chapters in edited volumes and peer-reviewed articles, from the early 1990s until the start of 2020, a period of approximately 30 years. It thus offers not only a critical review of the state of the art in this field of study but also a key point of reference for researchers looking to develop our understanding of internal displacement from the standpoint of a variety of different disciplines and themes.

The paper forms part of a series of papers published in this Working Paper Series that review the state of the scholarship on internal displacement at the global level and in particular regions as we enter the decade of the 2020s. This research forms part of the Interdisciplinary Network on Displacement, Conflict and Protection (AH/T005351/1) and Global Engagement on Internal Displacement in sub-Saharan Africa (EP/T003227/1) projects, pilots of which were supported by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). It should be read in conjunction with the other review papers in this series.

Keywords

Internal Displacement, IDPs, Conflict, Middle East, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan

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1. Introduction

Conflict around the world has resulted in an increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), to the extent that numbers have become higher than that of refugees.¹ Despite the high numbers however, the protection provided to IDPs is not as robust as that of refugees. This is mainly due to the lack of international legal frameworks that protect IDPs and ensure their access to rights, as well as the poor compliance of protection frameworks that are in place.² Internal displacement caused by conflict is, as Ibeanu explains, a matter that the state should be held responsible for and accountable to, because 'in all modern societies it is the state that frames, focuses and mediates conflicts.'³ In some cases, however, states can be an accomplice to the conflict by prioritising political agendas over human security. State-induced displacement can instigate violence by creating divisions and fostering a sense of 'the other' between citizens.⁴

This scoping study examines the principal trends in internal displacement in the Middle East region, with specific focus on Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan. It starts (2) by providing a contextual overview of the IDP situation in the Middle East and in each of the following countries: Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan. It then provides a review of published articles (3) on internal displacement in the areas of social sciences, arts and humanities; law and policy; and public health and medicine. The study concludes (4) with key gaps identified from the literature review for further research. This study complements the global overview and other regional studies reflecting on internal displacement and the state of literature on the subject

1 UNHCR, (2019) *Global trends forced displacement in 2018*. Retrieved April 21, 2020, from <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>.

2 IDMC, (2014) *Syria: Forsaken IDPs adrift inside a fragmenting state*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <http://www.internaldisplacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/2014/syria-forsaken-idps-adrift-inside-a-fragmenting-state>.

3 Ibeanu, O. O. (1999) Exiles in their own home: Conflicts and internal population displacement in Nigeria. *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 12(2): 161–179 (p.163).

4 Orchard, P. (2010) The perils of humanitarianism: Refugee and IDP protection in situations of regime-induced displacement. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 29(1), 38-60

2. Principal internal displacement trends in the Middle East

By the start of 2020, 30% of new conflict-related displacements worldwide were from the Middle East and North Africa, reaching over 2.5 million IDPs during that year.⁵ Prior to that there was very little in the region, mostly remnants of wars with Israel and campaigns by Saddam Hussein. The reason for these new displacements has been mainly due to conflict in the Middle East countries of Syria, Yemen and Iraq, which are categorised as L3 emergencies.⁶ These three countries also accounted for 11.4 million of the total displaced people in the Middle East by the end of 2017. Syria and Iraq have also had the first and fourth highest rates of internal displacement reaching 6.8 and 2.7 million IDPs respectively, and Yemen is the sixth highest country with IDPs, amounting to 2 million people. Moreover, millions of people have not been able to go back to their homes because of issues such as insecurity, destroyed houses and infrastructure, and poor availability of basic services and livelihood strategies.⁷

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has been the main causes of new displacement in Iraq and Syria during 2017. The Middle East faces great obstacles to protecting IDPs displaced due to conflict. Moreover, despite having relatively low disaster displacement data, the risk of disaster in the region is high. Some of the common hazards affecting the region include 'drought, desertification, flooding and earthquakes'.⁸

In 2012, the Arab League adopted a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategy, and commitment was reflected from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to develop a risk reduction roadmap. The Arab League's DRR Strategy is important because it highlights the importance of prioritising the needs of vulnerable populations such as IDPs. While these are steps that show progress in the movement towards greater protection for IDPs, significant challenges remain, such as, for example, inadequate political will to support IDPs and the tendency for states to escape their responsibility of providing protection, as well as poor capacities of national bodies to ensure that standardised data is produced to inform decision-makers on how to best address the needs of IDPs.⁹

Hence, despite the significantly high levels of displacement in the Middle East, existing regional and national policies fail to ensure adequate protection to IDPs, and states continue to show poor political will in addressing the root causes of displacement. The international community has also played a role in this, as it has failed to hold perpetrators accountable to human rights violations.¹⁰ The sections below provide a brief overview of the internal displacement situation in the various affected countries in the region.

2.1 Syria

Understanding the political history of Syria is important to comprehend the current conflict in the country. Syria belonged to Ottoman rule up until the First World War, and after the collapse of the empire, was temporarily ruled by the French until it finally became recognised as an independent country in 1941. Hafez al Assad gained power in 1970, who was a member of the Alawite religious minority group and the socialist Baath party. Assad's ruling, was described as one that valued "Arabism" over other dividing issues, including sectarianism, as well as being

5 IDMC, (2020) *Grid 2019. Global Report on Internal Displacement*. Retrieved April 21, 2020, from <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/downloads/2019-GRID.pdf>.

6 IASC, (2019) *IASC System-wide response activations and deactivations*. Retrieved April 21, 2020, from <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda/iasc-system-wide-response-activations-and-deactivations>.

7 IDMC, (2019) *Grid 2018. Global Report on Internal Displacement*. Retrieved April 21, 2020, from <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/downloads/2018-GRID.pdf>.

8 IDMC, (2018) *Middle East and north Africa*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/downloads/report/2018-GRID-region-middle-east-north-africa.pdf>.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

relatively secular. The Muslim Brotherhood were the main opposition group to the Baath party, and were of the view that Syria should be a Sunni dominant country.

One of the major displacements that took place in Syria occurred during the Six-Day War in 1967, when the Golan Heights was occupied by Israel. Before Israel's occupation, there were more than 140,000 Syrians residing in the Golan Heights, however, following the war, many were forced to leave, and their homes were destroyed. In October 1973, Syria tried to retake the Golan Heights from Israel and managed to gain control of parts of it, including its capital Quneitra. In 1981, Israel regained control of the Syrian parts of the Golan Heights, and in response to this, the international community formulated Security Council Resolution 497 (1981), which labelled Israel's actions as "null and void", and as such reaffirming Israel's illegal annexation of the 'Syrian Golan'.¹¹

In 2000, Assad died and was succeeded by his son Bashar Al Assad, who was more open to political discourse in the country. However, this was swiftly ended by the younger Assad who had ordered the imprisonment of several intellectuals and political activists in the country. Moreover, the economic policies in the country, greatly excluded Sunni workers in Syria and benefited Alawites, which in turn led to further destabilisation in the country.¹² Other factors that contributed to the Syrian conflict of 2011 include the drought and economic depression that the country faced before the Arab Spring. Additionally, the Arab Spring that began in Tunisia in December 2010, also had a ripple effect on other Arab countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Yemen and Syria. In 2011, massive demonstrations took place in Syria, which were dealt with by military violence in hopes of cracking down the Syrian uprising. The government's escalating use of violence led to further radicalisation of opposition groups and an increase in internal chaos. In turn, this chaos brought way for the emergence of the Islamic State.¹³

The Syrian conflict has been termed as the worst humanitarian crisis since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, in contrast to other conflicts in the region, the crisis in Syria is an outcome of an uprising that transformed into an all-out civil war. Going on for nine years now, it has resulted in 11.7 million persons (5.9 million females and 5.8 million males) needing humanitarian assistance, of whom five million are in acute need. Moreover, 10.2 million people are living in areas in Syria that are affected by explosives. The Syrian crisis has also resulted in the mass displacements of people, as up to 5 million Syrians have sought refuge in countries outside Syria, almost 6.5 million are living in internal displacement, and 4.5 million live in areas that are besieged.¹⁴ Turkey currently hosts the largest number of UNHCR-registered refugees globally, amounting to 3.2 million and of whom 2.9 million are Syrians. Moreover, 56% of IDPs inside Syria have been displaced twice or more times.¹⁵ This includes 10,000 persons displaced in Syria on a daily basis, with 50% of them being children.¹⁶

Of the 6.5 million IDPs in Syria, most live in informal settlements and temporary camps with little security, protection and access to medical care and humanitarian support.¹⁷ Aspects such as poor security, lack of government services, limited health care services, inadequate vaccination coverage and insufficient medical staff and equipment, have contributed to higher morbidity

11 NRC, (2005) *Profile of internal displacement: Syrian Arab Republic*. Retrieved May 2, 2020, from <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3bd98d5d0.pdf>.

12 Wallace, D., McCarthy, A., & Reeves, S. R. (2017) Trying to Make Sense of the Senseless: Classifying the Syrian War under the Law of Armed Conflict. *Mich. St. Int'l L. Rev.*, 25, 555.

13 Ibid.

14 The most recent IDMC figures estimate the number of Syrians living in internal displacement as 6.495 million as of the start of 2020. See IDMC, *Grid 2019*. For other figures, see UNHCR, (2020) *Syria Regional Refugee Response*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria#_ga=2.87672475.2089617872.1497030295%132087191681.1489940027.

15 Mooney, E. (2014) *The Inside Story: Internal displacement in Syria* *Forced Migration Review*.

16 Doocy, S., Lyles, E., Delbiso, T. D., Robinson, C. W., & IOCC/GOPA Study Team. (2015) Internal displacement and the Syrian crisis: an analysis of trends from 2011–2014. *Conflict and Health*, 9(1), 33.

17 Akbarzada, S., & Mackey, T. K. (2018) The Syrian public health and humanitarian crisis: A 'displacement' in global governance?. *Global public health*, 13(7), 914-930.

and mortality rates among people living in the northern areas of Syria since the start of the war.¹⁸

The Syrian war has become a protracted crisis and according to UNHCR estimates, there are over one million Syrian children born as refugees in hosting countries.¹⁹ Although Syria has seen a de-escalation of the conflict in most parts of the country, the repercussions of nine years of war has had a shattering and lasting impact on the Syrian population. In fact, around 83% of Syrians live below the poverty line, and 33% are in need of early recovery and livelihood support.²⁰

One of the effects of the war in Syria has been the defragmentation of the country's local governance. Consequently, several local administrative councils (LACs) have been established in areas where opposition factions have had control. These are believed to represent Syria's autonomy from the regime and played a major role in providing basic public services to communities in non-regime-controlled areas.²¹ A constitution has also been drafted by committees representing local councils that are supported by the opposition coalition, the Syrian National Council (SNC).²²

The LACs have significantly contributed to the provision of essential public services to communities; however, these councils face many challenges as they are often targeted by the regime and are usually only able to exercise their influence in their regions. Other challenges include the lack of funding available for LACs, their over reliance on international funding, and the generally poor experience of council members as many skilled people have fled the country. The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) is another governance structure that has emerged following the Syrian conflict in 2012. A key role of the ACU is to coordinate between the different humanitarian actors and ensure that assistance is delivered to all Syrians.²³ ISIL was also another governing body in Syria that has offered public services such as health care in the areas it has controlled during the war.²⁴

The recent withdrawal of the US forces followed by the invasion of north east Syria by the Turkish forces has also led to numerous civilian casualties in the region. Meanwhile, in north west Syria, health facilities are continuously being targeted by the regime resulting in a significant number of civilian casualties.²⁵ Moreover, Government forces supported by the Russian military and Iranian militias have carried out full scale attacks in these areas since December 2019, resulting in a mass displacement of up to 700,000 people, mostly children and women, fleeing the violence.²⁶

2.2 Iraq

The IDP crisis in Iraq is a result of an accumulation of events that have taken place over time. It can go back to the 1990s during Saddam Hussein's regime and vision to 'Arabise' the northern oil-rich parts of Iraq, and the consequent unsettled displacement of Iraq's minorities including Kurdish, and Turkmen populations.²⁷ Other related events include attempts by Kurdish author-

18 Al-Moujahed A, Alahdab F, Abolaban H, Beletsky L. (2017) Polio in Syria: problem still not solved. *Avicenna J Med*,7(2):64–6.

19 UNHCR, (2020) *Regional Strategic Overview 2020-21: 3RP Regional refugee and resilience plan in response to the Syrian crisis*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/731116>.

20 HNO, (2019) *Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2019*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://hno-syria.org/#contacts>.

21 Ali, A. (2015) The security gap in Syria: Individual and collective security in "rebel-held" territories. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 4(1), 136; Aljundi, G. (2014) *Local governance inside Syria: Challenges, opportunities and recommendations*. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5416e7d14.html>.

22 Ibid.

23 Menapolis.net. (2013) *Local councils in Syria: A sovereignty crisis in liberated areas*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <http://menapolis.net/publications/files/1425551004pdf1SyriaLAC.pdf>.

24 Aljundi, G. (2014) *Local governance inside Syria: Challenges, opportunities and recommendations*. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5416e7d14.html>.

25 UN News, (2019) *Hundreds of thousands of civilians at risk in Syria amid ongoing violence in northeast and northwest*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/11/1050961>.

26 Petkova, M. (2020) *Idlib IDPs: 'The situation is so bad, it is like judgement day'*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/idlib-idps-situation-bad-judgement-day-200209185803604.html>.

27 Riordan, N. (2016) Internal displacement in Iraq: internally displaced persons and disputed territory. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 28(2), 10.

ities since 2005 to control territories, particularly Ninewa and Kirkuk. Moreover, the US-led war on Iraq also led to further displacement, the peak of which took place between 2006 and 2008 during the revolution. The war with ISIL is the most recent event that has caused displacement in the country.²⁸

The Ministry of Displacement and Migration (IMoDM) is responsible for managing issues on displacement in the country. Registration with the IMoDM is necessary to become eligible for support, however, it is only open to post-2006 IDPs, and as such, excludes those who fled following the invasion of 2003.²⁹

Throughout most of the country's history, political affiliation and ethnic and religious identity has been the main driver of violence and displacement.³⁰ Iraq has had to deal with an accumulation of massive displacements and returns over time. The first mass displacement took place after the United States led a war against the Baath party and was able to overthrow the regime. Consequently, there were around 500,000 people displaced (both internally and from abroad) by the regime returning between 2003 and 2005. A post – 2003 mass movement also took place, comprising of people who were forced to leave by returnees, and those who chose to leave in fear of being persecuted by IDPs once they return. This movement led to a further displacement of 200,000 persons between 2003 – 2005.³¹

Mass displacement also took place in 2006, after the bombing of the shrines in Samarra, and following Saddam Hussein's ruling. Around a year after that, Iraq saw 1.6 million people fleeing from their households for safety due to conflict caused by the different sects in Iraq. The displacement that took place put large strain on the already pressured institutions providing basic services to people in the country, particularly in areas where displaced persons settled. Moreover, as well as having to deal with the increase in demand for basic services, there were other needs that neither local nor national authorities were able to meet. For example, in Baghdad, several displaced persons were living in public buildings and informal settlements because of the Iraqi government's inability to provide shelter for them. The mass displacements that came about also placed greater pressure on public service providers such as those issuing official documentation, including personal identity cards, birth certificates, property documents, and residence permits. In addition to that, the settlement of displaced people in locations that were previously uninhabited also meant that security services were required to operate in areas they had previously not worked in.³²

Like Syrian IDPs it is also not uncommon for Iraqis to have experienced multiple displacements over time. Van der Auweraert explains that it is not possible to apply an integrated approach to displacement and return, claiming that the multiple mass displacements that took place in Iraq vary in characteristic and therefore need to be approached differently. For example, the general perception of those who were displaced after the 2003 has been as 'victims' of an oppressive regime in need of compensation for the injustice they experienced. Meanwhile, those displaced after 2006 are generally regarded as vulnerable people in need of humanitarian support.³³

Chatelard also highlights the importance of flexible and adaptable approaches to addressing the challenges of Iraqi refugees in urban contexts. These challenges include inadequate availability of funding, poor data on refugees, and political will to support them. The adaptability and flex-

28 Ibid.

29 Chatty D & Mansour N, (2011) Unlocking Protracted Displacement: An Iraqi Case Study. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 30(4), pp50-83.

30 International Federation for Human Rights and Alliance International pour la Justice, (2003) *Iraq: Continuous and Silent Ethnic Cleansing Displaced Persons in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iraqi Refugees in Iraq*. Retrieved April 26, 2020, from <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/iq350a.pdf>.

31 Van der Auweraert P, (2011) Displacement and National Institutions: Reflections on the Iraqi Experience, *Middle East Institute and Fondation pour le Recherche Strategique*, p6.

32 Ibid.

33 Van der Auweraert P, (2011) 'Displacement and National Institutions: Reflections on the Iraqi Experience', Middle East Institute and Fondation pour le Recherche Strategique, p6.

ibility of NGOs has also helped them reach out to ‘most vulnerable’ refugees as well as support marginalised host populations with the purpose of fostering social cohesion between them.³⁴

In her discussion on durable solutions, Chatelard explains that resettlement in a third country is a first choice for most Iraqi refugees, and a right for those granted refugee status. Some host countries in the Middle East have provided local integration opportunities to Iraqis, however, these have been through migration or other legal mechanisms rather than their refugee status.³⁵

The UNHCR has highlighted that protracted refugee situations are usually an outcome of lack of political action from countries of origin and/or host countries.³⁶ Chatelard highlights the need for assistance to shift from a humanitarian lens to one that addresses the mid to long term needs of both protracted refugees and vulnerable host communities.³⁷ Addressing the needs of protracted refugees also requires funding of international donors to transform from humanitarian to development support. Furthermore, aid allocation should focus on supporting economic development and income-generating opportunities, through for example, facilitating the issuance of residence permits to refugees, making it easier for them to access entrepreneurship and training, and higher education opportunities.³⁸

Iraqi refugees also need to be given the opportunity to take part in the peace-building and infrastructure rebuilding process of their country. Providing a possible solution to improve coordination of donor funding in Iraq, Chatelard suggests that the US and EU contribute to the joint management of a National Displacement Fund to support IDPs. Moreover, in order for solutions to be durable, the international community should encourage the Iraqi government to take an active role in resolving political problems in the country. Furthermore, the international community should ensure that appropriate conditions are provided for IDPs wishing to return and reintegrate into their original settlements or elsewhere. The international community should also provide suitable conditions for those wishing to stay in their host communities or live in other areas of the country. These efforts need to truly support peace-building and reconciliation work that can facilitate the reintegration of IDPs, so that they are able to achieve their rights as equals to other citizens in their country.³⁹

When comparing between the humanitarian aid provided to refugees and that allocated to IDPs, it is much less for the latter.⁴⁰ Since 2009, international donors have moved more towards medium to long-term funding agendas in Iraq, focusing on areas such as good governance, sustainable economic development and investing in human capital. Moreover, donors have shown an interest in funding interventions that focus on strengthening the government’s capacity to rebuild the country and ensure the welfare of its own people. In light of this information, Chatelard highlights the importance of mainstreaming vulnerable IDPs and returnees in the development agendas of the country. As important is the need to deregister IDPs after they have been fully reintegrated, however, this should be a voluntary process. Moreover, IDPs should be provided the choice of: 1) voluntary return; 2) local integration or 3) resettlement to other regions of the country.⁴¹

Van der Auweraert also highlights the difficulty of adopting a single approach to internal dis-

34 Chatelard G, (2011) Iraqi Refugees and IDPs: From Humanitarian Intervention to Durable Solutions, Middle East *Institute and Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique*. Retrieved April 26, 2020, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_report_109.pdf.

35 Chatelard G, (2011) Iraqi Refugees and IDPs: From Humanitarian Intervention to Durable Solutions, Middle East *Institute and Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique*. Retrieved April 26, 2020, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_report_109.pdf.

36 UNHCR, (2004) *Protracted Refugee Situation*. Retrieved April 29, 2020, from <https://www.unhcr.org/40c982172.pdf>.

37 Chatelard G, (2011) Iraqi Refugees and IDPs: From Humanitarian Intervention to Durable Solutions, Middle East *Institute and Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique*. Retrieved April 26, 2020, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_report_109.pdf.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

placement because the needs of IDPs in Iraq vary depending on their geographic locations and the period in which they were displaced. So, for example, in the case of IDPs from the post-2006 conflict in Iraq; 53% wanted to return to their areas of origin, 25% supported local integration and 20% were interested in resettlement.⁴² These differences highlight the importance of having flexible and participatory solutions to IDP situations in order for them to be meaningful and durable.⁴³ In order to move to that direction, Iraq needs to be more decentralised and local governments should be more engaged and proactive in the process of addressing IDP needs. Aurweraert also highlights the need for social policies to target IDPs and returning populations as they qualify as vulnerable populations as well.⁴⁴

Moving on to more recent figures of displacement, in 2014, Iraq had the highest percentage of internal displacement worldwide, reaching up to 2.2 million newly displaced persons.⁴⁵ Moreover, according to figures from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2015), there were 4 million IDPs in Iraq by June 2015. While the displacement can be largely attributed to the violence caused by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), other associated factors include violence from other armed factions and bombings from pro – government militias to control territories.⁴⁶ Ferris describes displacement in Iraq as a means to gain territory and political power.⁴⁷ Territorial disputes between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Government of Iraq (GOI) covers fifteen districts within Ninawa, Kirkuk, Arbil, Salah Ad – Din, and Diyala Governorates. Kirkuk Governorate is of particular importance to both parties because of its wealth in gas and oil.⁴⁸

During the ISIL war, many people fled to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) for safety. It became an area of refuge for up to one million Iraqi IDPs from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.⁴⁹ Adding to this were the 245,000 displaced Syrian refugees who were residing in the KRI region.⁵⁰ According to World Bank figures, there were 1.4 million IDPs and refugees in KRI, while the number of Kurdish people was only five million. This mass influx resulted in an increase in the region's population by 28% within several months.⁵¹

An analysis of findings of the International Office of Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data showed that despite displacement being a problem throughout Iraq, IDPs are most concentrated in four governorates, which are: Baghdad (with 585,498 IDPs), Al Anbar (with 573,450 IDPs), Dihok (with 423,846 IDPs) and Kirkuk (with 381,576 IDPs). Moreover, the majority of IDPs (up to 87%) are originally from the Governorates of Al Anbar (42%), Ninewa (32%) and Salah Ad Din (13%), reflecting a large number of Sunni IDPs.⁵² As for the location of the majority of camps, these are situated outside KRI, in private lands and emergency shelter settings. More than 50% of IDPs are located in the Governorate of Kirkuk, who are hosted in privately owned

42 IOM, (2011) *Review of Displacement and Return in Iraq*. Baghdad Amman: IOM.

43 Van der Auweraert P, (2011) *Displacement and National Institutions: Reflections on the Iraqi Experience*, Middle East Institute and Fondation pour le Recherche Strategique, p6.

44 Ibid.

45 Riordan, N. (2016) Internal displacement in Iraq: internally displaced persons and disputed territory. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 28(2), 10.

46 Ferris, E. and Teff, M. (2015) *The Overlooked Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq: the Need to Address Disparities*. Middle East Policy and Politics (Blog), Brookings.

47 Ferris, E.G., (2008) *The Looming Crisis: Displacement and Security in Iraq*. Foreign Policy at Brookings, Policy Paper N. 5 Retrieved April 26, 2020, from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/08_iraq_ferris.pdf.

48 Anderson, L., Stansfield, G. (2009) *Crisis in Kirkuk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

49 Shanks, K. (2019) The Politics of IDP Education Provision: Negotiating identity and schooling in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. *International Migration*, 57(2), 32-47

50 UNHCR, (2015) *Operational Update*. Retrieved April 26, 2020, from http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Iraq%20IDP%20Operational%20Update%20%28ENG%29%201-31MAR16_0.pdf.

51 World Bank, (2015) *The Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Assessing the Economic and Social Impact of the Syrian Conflict and ISIS*, World Bank Group, Washington, DC. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/579451468305943474/The-Kurdistan-region-of-Iraq-assessing-the-economic-and-social-impact-of-the-Syrian-conflict-and-ISIS>.

52 Cornish, C., (2015) *The tragedy of Iraq's Sunnis*. Retrieved April 20, 2020, from <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2015/09/16>.

lands. The type of shelters available to IDPs raises concerns on intentions to create permanent residencies for IDPs.⁵³

The conflict in Iraq has had a great impact on children and youth, interrupting their education and exposing them to great harm and abuse, and lack of future opportunities. IDP children in Iraq are at a great risk of marginalisation and the international community has even recognised this claiming a risk of losing of a generation of children in both Iraq and Syria due to the regional crisis.⁵⁴ Shanks highlights the importance of finding sustainable measures to support IDP children and youth to be re-empowered through measures such as greater access to education.⁵⁵

Topics that are frequently discussed within the humanitarian and sustainable development sectors in Iraq include protracted displacement and sustainable return. IOM conducted a longitudinal study in Iraq to understand reasons why some people chose to return home after conflict has ended while others choose not to. Factors reported to influence return included aspects such as household characteristics, economic status, duration of displacement and the experience of displacement and issues of security. Study findings showed that security was a key issue that influenced the IDPs' choice to, or not to return. Moreover, the presence of displaced people who are from a different ethnic, religious or tribal background also discourages people to return.⁵⁶

Study findings also highlighted that displacement was perceived as a consequence of a lack of safety that faced by IDPs. Moreover, people who were displaced were more likely to have a lower standard of living than those who were not. Coping mechanisms used by IDPs included reduced standard of living, limiting food intake and purchasing of clothing, borrowing money and relying on aid. In the case of livelihood strategies, factors associated to poor economic opportunities for IDPs were discrimination and lack of resources. The study also showed that IDPs were unable to achieve durable solutions even after three years of displacement.⁵⁷

Hence, displacement in Iraq needs to be approached in a flexible and participatory manner in order for durable solutions to be achieved. Enhanced collaboration between IDPs, the state and humanitarian agencies is needed. The government needs to provide IDPs with access to cash as well as compensation, which in turn, is likely to affect their choices of return. The study also confirms the main premise of the Inter – Agency Standing Committee's (IASC's) Framework, which is that people's geographic return to their homes is not necessarily a sustainable solution.⁵⁸

Moreover, various efforts have been made, particularly at within provinces, to improve social cohesion and address the problem of discrimination based on ethnic and religious identity in Iraq through interventions that focus on dialogue and negotiations. However, despite the efforts, and changes to constitutional articles with the aim of resolving disputed territories was not possible, as the GOI and KRG stakeholders reached political block in negotiations.⁵⁹

2.3 Yemen

The conflict in Yemen has resulted in an internal displacement of over 3.6 million people,⁶⁰ 20% of whom reside in settlements or public buildings, many of which have been schools. These temporary forms of settlements have become long-term lived-in spaces for many IDPs. The pro-

53 Riordan, N. (2016) Internal displacement in Iraq: internally displaced persons and disputed territory. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 28(2), 10.

54 UNICEF, (2014) *No Lost Generation – Protecting the Futures of Children Affected by the Crisis in Syria*, UN Children's Fund, New York.

55 Shanks, K. (2019) The Politics of IDP Education Provision: Negotiating identity and schooling in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. *International Migration*, 57(2), 32-47.

56 IOM, (2019) *Access to durable solutions among IRPs in Iraq. Four Years in Displacement*.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Riordan, N. (2016) Internal displacement in Iraq: internally displaced persons and disputed territory. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 28(2), 10.

60 IDMC, *Grid 2019*.

tracted situation of IDPs has created resentment among host communities and authorities, with reports of some being forced out of public schools. Meanwhile, IDPs reported that they refrained from leaving the school spaces to search for work, because they feared the safety of their female family members.⁶¹

Yemen saw a continuation of conflict in 2017, and the launch of the Operation Golden Spear by pro-government forces, who were supported by the Saudis, resulted in more displacement in the country. It is estimated that 41,000 people were forced to migrate in search of safety as a consequence of the violence that broke out, with many more to follow. Moreover, blockades taking place also meant that the country had severe shortages in basic services such as food, and medicine, forcing people to flee in search for humanitarian support. During 2019, in total, there were 398,000 new displacements recorded during the year.⁶²

Yemen already had significant humanitarian needs before the escalation of the conflict in the country in March 2015. For many years, the country has faced challenges such as high youth unemployment and poverty rates, weak governance structures and poor social services. In fact, it is estimated that 50% and 75% of the population does not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation respectively.⁶³

The social structure in Yemen is based on tribalism, whereby tribal leaders (Sheikhs) are like states, having power to make decisions on behalf of their communities, and at the same time being held responsible and accountable to the needs of their community members, which includes providing them with security, protection and economic opportunities.⁶⁴

Following the current war in Yemen, some of the sheikhs have sided with armed groups, giving them more power and status. Moreover, the diminished faith in the country's government is another issue that has further strengthened the power of tribal structures in the country. In fact, according to IDMC, 65% of IDPs reported depending on community leaders for protection and to resolve disputes. Moreover, humanitarian NGOs working in Yemen have sought approvals from tribal leaders prior to implementing interventions in their communities.⁶⁵

2.4 Afghanistan

Internal displacement in Afghanistan is complex and problematic. It is associated to a variety of factors, including the protraction of the crisis in the country, continued insecurity and natural hazards. The country's history has had many periods of displacement, in fact, it is estimated that up to 67% of all Afghans have been displaced at one point in their lives. Moreover, according to IDMC figures, there are 984,000 IDPs in Afghanistan.⁶⁶

The fighting in Afghanistan is between the Afghan army and non-state military factions such as, ISIL-Khorasan and the Taliban. The fighting has led to mass displacements in the provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and Takhar. The most significant conflict-related event recorded in 2019, which led to 36,000 new displacements, took place between the military and Taliban in Takhar province. Moreover, fighting in March between ISIL-affiliated fighters on Taliban locations in the Chapadara district of Kunar province, also led to up to 25,000 new displacements. Many of these IDPs were forced to leave their belongings and lacked access to basic services such as clean water, placing them at risk of diseases. It also meant that IDPs had to migrate to areas with

61 Al-Sabahi, M., & Motahar, G. (2017) Using public schools as shelter for IDPs in Yemen. *Forced Migration Review*, (55).

62 IDMC, *Grid 2019*.

63 IDMC, (2018) *Middle East and north Africa*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/downloads/report/2018-GRID-region-middle-east-north-africa.pdf>.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Willner-Reid, M. (2016) IDPs in Afghanistan: A Confused National Glossary. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 35(4), 79-96.

safe water which placed them at greater risk of being exposed to violence.⁶⁷

The situation of IDPs in Afghanistan is further worsened by lack of employment opportunities in the country, high poverty rates, landlessness and poor access to basic services. A recent study on IDP movements in Afghanistan highlighted that larger scale families were more likely to receive support from aid providers because the probability of them being noticed is greater.⁶⁸

Natural hazards such as floods, droughts, earthquakes also result in displacement in Afghanistan. In fact, during 2019, there were about 578,000 newly displaced people in Afghanistan, of whom 461,000 and 1117,000 were displaced due to conflict and disasters respectively.⁶⁹

Migration in Afghanistan commonly occurs from rural to urban areas of the country, mainly due to a combination of economic factors and lack of security. The rapid urbanisation in Afghanistan has been associated to the migration of Afghans from rural to urban areas of the country and is also described as unsustainable. Moreover, there is a general negative perception on IDPs and people who migrate from rural to urban areas of the country. In fact, it is not uncommon for them to be associated to crime as well as increased competition for jobs. It is also common for government actors refuse to recognise 'IDPs', highlighting poor political willingness to address issues of displacement in the country. Nevertheless, Afghanistan culture also places importance on 'hospitality' and 'compassion' towards people in need. For these reasons local municipalities preferred that IDPs eventually return back to their original homes.⁷⁰

67 IDMC, NRC, (2019) *11 million people displaced within their countries in the Middle East and North Africa*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019-grid-pressrelease-mena-en.pdf>.

68 Willner-Reid, M. (2016). IDPs in Afghanistan: A Confused National Glossary. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 35(4), 79-96.

69 IDMC, *Grid 2019*.

70 Willner-Reid, M. (2016) IDPs in Afghanistan: A Confused National Glossary. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 35(4), 79-96.

3. Research scholarship on internal displacement

3.1 Social sciences, arts and humanities

Much of the literature on the social sciences and arts and humanities is focused on the influence of displacement on gender. Haddad describes how women in Syria have taken up crucial roles to smuggle medicines and other needed items through borders because they are less likely to get stopped.⁷¹ Moreover, IDP women are described to have gone through a transformation of roles within their families and communities. This transformation has given them greater opportunity to engage in the public sphere. Moreover, Haddad highlights the difficulties faced by rural women who are IDPs, as they tend to lack livelihood capacities needed to earn a living in their new environments. Moreover, the majority of rural women in Syria belong to low income families and are illiterate and lack awareness of health and hygiene issues.⁷²

The literature has also focused on the negative implications of displacement and conflict on affected populations. However, Al Ajlan describes how displacement can lead to economic benefits on host communities and IDPs in some situations. Giving the example of Ar-Raqqa city in north east Syria, Al Ajlan describes how, despite the added pressure on infrastructure due to IDP influxes, host communities had greater opportunities to raise rent prices, and jobs were also created due to increased humanitarian funding. Moreover, weakening governing structures meant that people were able to take advantage of opportunities, such as, building shops without having to issue permits, which often involved lengthy procedures.⁷³

Al Ajlan also refers to the opportunities that displacement has facilitated for gender roles to be challenged. Women – particularly those who are heads of their households – have been forced to take on non-conventional roles due to financial pressure and the need to sustain a livelihood. Rather than providing traditional forms of support such as cash and food items, Al Ajlan believes that humanitarian aid should focus more on rebuilding infrastructure in conflicted affected areas, as this would lead to greater job opportunities for IDPs and host communities.⁷⁴

Sexual violence is also a common phenomenon in conflict affected contexts to which women and girls are at greater risk of compared to men and boys. It is therefore not surprising that much of the literature on sexual violence in conflict affected settings has focused on women and girls, with little known on male sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) survivors and how their needs can be met. A study conducted by Chynoweth on SGBV in the Middle East (Lebanon, Jordan and KRI) and Greece highlighted various reports of sexual violence against refugee men and boys, with little services to support them. Accounts were also reported of sexual violence against men and adolescent boys in Syria inflicted by regime and non-regime actors.⁷⁵

The literature on social sciences and arts also highlights the vulnerability of IDPs in relation to various intersectional social markers such as, gender, disability, sexuality, religion and ethnicity.^{76,77,78} The importance of prioritising assistance according to the needs of people rather than their status as IDPs or host communities was also highlighted. Two significant factors that influenced people's access to humanitarian aid in Yemen had to do with their access to information

71 Haddad, Z. (2014) How the crisis is altering women's roles in Syria. *Forced Migration Review*, (47).

72 Ibid.

73 Al Ajlan, A. (2018) Syrian economies: a temporary boom? *Forced Migration Review*, (58), 29-29.

74 Ibid.

75 Chynoweth, S. K., Freccero, J., & Touquet, H. (2017) Sexual violence against men and boys in conflict and forced displacement: implications for the health sector. *Reproductive health matters*, 25(51), 90-94.

76 Brown, B. (2019). Afghan Women Refugees: Application of Intersectionality Feminist Theory. *Caring for the Vulnerable*, 97.

77 Crock, M., Smith-Khan, L., McCallum, R., & Saul, B. (2017) Disability, intersectionality and context: Forgotten and Invisible?. In *The Legal Protection of Refugees with Disabilities*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

78 Albuero-Cañete, K. Z. K. (2014) Bodies at risk: "managing" sexuality and reproduction in the aftermath of disaster in the Philippines Kaira. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 18(1), 33-51.

and the attitudes that communities had on them. The Oxfam study showed that despite being trusted, tribal leaders were not perceived as the preferred medium to transfer information between them and humanitarian actors.⁷⁹ Instead, other channels reported to be of greater preference include through cell phone calling and by word of mouth. A better understanding of how communities perceive vulnerability is also needed. Elaborating on this point Al Sabahi explains that while IDPs in Yemen are vulnerable, others such as 'al-muhamasheen' ('the marginalised'), are minority groups in the country who have been discriminated against and excluded from society for a long period of time. They are often out of work and rely mainly on humanitarian aid to survive. They also lack protection mechanisms and access to services because they are not recognised by tribal leaders.⁸⁰

3.2 Law and policy

The literature on law and policy in relation to internal displacement in the Middle East is scarce. A key topic discussed in the literature has to do with 'legal identity' and its importance to accessing basic human rights such as education, employment and health. Although acquiring a legal identity is a basic human right enshrined in international law, it is common for internally displaced persons in conflict affected contexts to lack such documentation. In their article on displaced Syrians, Clutterbuck, Cunial, Barsanti and Gewis highlight the vulnerability of IDPs without legal identity.⁸¹ Lack of documentation such as birth, marriage and death certificates greatly affects the daily lives of displaced people and their families. For instance, Clutterbuck, Cunial, Barsanti and Gewis report that less than a quarter of displaced married women interviewed in South Syria mentioned having marriage certificates, which are needed to issue birth certificates. Without birth certificates children cannot register in schools. The family booklet is another important legal document, which is needed to obtain all other civil documentation in Syria.⁸² According to recent surveys conducted by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) around 40% of Syrian IDPs surveyed claimed that they did not have their family booklet. Moreover, those who had reported having their family booklet were not able to register children born in non-regime-controlled areas. This is a key problem in north west Syria where around 50% of children aged five and under are not included their family booklets. National identity cards are also provided to children that reach 14 years of age, however, due to the closure of civil registries in areas such as north west Syria, for example, a quarter of IDPs aged 14 and above do not have their ID cards.^{83,84,85}

The 'right of return' is another important entitlement related to IDPs in post-conflict situations. In countries such as Iraq, the government and international organisations have used return as a measure of success to the IDP situation. However, it is impossible to consider return as a durable solution without looking at the process in which it takes place, and recognising that this process, in most cases, takes years to happen. For instance, in the case of Iraqis in Nineveh Governorate, where returns have been taking place, conflict remains between the Iraqi and Kurdish authorities and the lack of a formal policy and strategy has left communities in limbo as to who can and cannot return.⁸⁶ Furthermore, in the case of northern Nineveh, many IDPs have been labelled as

79 De Santis, F.A., Carter, S.E. (2016) *Enhancing informed engagement with conflict affected communities in Yemen*. Retrieved April 19, 2020, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/enhancing_informed_engagement_with_conflict_affected_communities_in_yemen.pdf.

80 Al-Sabahi, M., & De Santis, F. A. (2016) The role of cultural norms and local power structures in Yemen. *Forced Migration Review*, (53), 55.

81 Clutterbuck, M., Cunial, L., Barsanti, P., & Gewis, T. (2018) Establishing legal identity for displaced Syrians. *Forced Migration Review*, (57), 59-61.

82 Clutterbuck, M., Cunial, L., Barsanti, P., & Gewis, T. (2018) Establishing legal identity for displaced Syrians. *Forced Migration Review*, (57), 59-61.

83 NRC (2017) *Displacement, housing, land and property and access to civil documentation in the north west of the Syrian Arab Republic* <http://bit.ly/NRC-HCR-HLP-Syria-2017> and (2017) *Displacement, HLP and access to civil documentation in the south of the Syrian Arab Republic* <http://bit.ly/NRC-HCR-HLP-southSyria>

84 NRC (2017) *Syrian refugees' right to legal identity: implications for return* <http://bit.ly/NRC-Syrian-ID-2017briefing>

85 Clutterbuck, M., Cunial, L., Barsanti, P., & Gewis, T. (2018) Establishing legal identity for displaced Syrians. *Forced Migration Review*, (57), 59-61.

86 Siddiqui, N. (2018) Balancing the rights of displaced, returning and remaining populations: learning from Iraq. *Forced Migration Review*,

ISIS-affiliated. In such contexts, Siddiqui highlights the importance of taking into account aspects such as community grievances during IDP returns in order to ensure that further conflict does not occur.⁸⁷

Moreover, return policies and strategies also need to be able to include measures of restitution and compensation in order to avoid further conflict from taking place during IDP returns. The right for IDPs to have their houses, lands and properties and possessions protected is stipulated in principle 21 of the Guiding Principles. Principle 29 also holds states responsible for ensuring that IDPs have appropriate compensation or another means of fair reparation when the latter is not possible. In Iraq, many people do not have legal documentation to prove ownership of their lands in the court of law. Those who are particularly vulnerable to accessing their property rights are women and ethnic and religious minority groups, as well as IDPs affiliated to ISIS. Existing mechanisms to claim compensation rights in Iraq are also ineffective and take many years.⁸⁸

Early and forced marriages are also phenomena of particular concern during situations of displacement. A study conducted by the Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Researches highlighted the significant role that the personal status law plays in further consolidating negative social practices that are founded on tradition and customs.⁸⁹

In Iraq, some efforts have been made at a national level address IDP issues in the country. For example, Article 140 of the country's constitution was developed to address the conflict between the KRG and GOI over disputes on territories such as Kirkuk, through resettling and resolving property claims of people who were displaced during the 'Arabisation' campaign of Saddam Hussein. Following that, a census would be carried out and a referendum decision made on whether territories would remain under GOI or KRG control.⁹⁰ However, the normalisation process was not completed and there were several delays in the census. Moreover, ambiguities in the linguistics of the Iraqi constitution have provided space for different interpretations of the law.^{91,92}

KRG was able to gain greater control of Kirkuk from the GOI in 2014, and in April 2015 was able to regain 25 to 30% of ISIS controlled territories. Moreover, due to the significant numbers of IDP coming in and out of Kirkuk, a decision was made 2015 by the provincial authorities in August that forced IDPS from Diyala who were residing in Kirkuk to leave within a month. This action goes against international principles where citizens have a right to look for safety in other parts of a country and reside in their chosen locations without being forced to leave.⁹³ Moreover, despite the fact that the Kirkuk was under pressure to meet the needs of its citizens, such moves may have been based on a political agenda to maintain a larger Kurdish population, as most of the IDPs were Sunni Iraqis from Diayala. Kirkuk soon became under complete Kurdish control. To highlight this, the Kurdish president declared there was no need to consider Article 140 because of KRG's full control over Kirkuk. The steps taken by the KRG to take control over Kirkuk not only infringed on the rights of Sunni Arabs, but also affected the rights of other minorities residing there, such as Turkmen and Assyrians, who have strongly rejected assimilation into KRG control.⁹⁴

Military solutions do not address the root causes of conflict in Iraq, instead, they contributes

57, 64-65.

87 Ibid.

88 Sila, S., Shahaan, M., Clutterbuck, M. (2018) Protecting property: the Iraqi experience. *Forced Migration Review*, 59, 35-37.

89 Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research, (2018) *Factors affecting Syrian female minors' arranged marriages as a wide-spread phenomenon*. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from <https://sl-center.org/?p=613&lang=en>.

90 Riordan, N. (2016). Internal displacement in Iraq: internally displaced persons and disputed territory. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 28(2), 10.

91 International Crisis Group, (2005) *Unmaking Iraq: A Constitutional Process Gone Awry*, Middle East Briefing No. 19.

92 Natali, D. (2015) Counting on the Kurds, *Foreign Affairs*, Retrieved April 26, 2020, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2015-04-22/counting-kurds>.

93 Riordan, N. (2016) Internal displacement in Iraq: internally displaced persons and disputed territory. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 28(2), 10.

94 Ibid.

to greater displacement in the country. The insurgency and civil war in Iraq are an example to showcase such connections between displacement and military escalation. To address the problems in Iraq, Riordan suggests that entities such as the UN security Council, UNAMI and the international community encourage greater efforts to negotiate for peaceful solutions and assess the value of the GOI, KRG, Kirkuk Provincial Council (KPC) and other provincial councils going back to the Helsinki process in Iraq.⁹⁵

In the case of Afghanistan, it has a 2013 National Policy on IDPs, which aims to address the increasing number of IDPs in the country. A key aspect in the materialisation of the policy had to do with understanding the needs of IDPs. According to a nationwide study conducted on IDP protection in Afghanistan, internally displaced people in the country have it worse off than returning refugees and host populations because they were less likely to have access to services, housing and land. They were also more likely to live in poor housing conditions and display greater rates of food insecurity. As for the needs of IDPs, despite local integration being the preferred choice for Afghans, the Afghanistan Government has focused on return as a durable solution for them. Moreover, because the drafting process of the policy did not include Afghan stakeholders, this resulted in a reduced level of ownership of the policy at a national level.⁹⁶ The national IDP policy also fails to ensure a legal status to IDPs, nor does it provide them with a general registration.⁹⁷

Durable solutions for internally displaced persons can be achieved through sustainable reintegration of returning IDPs to their place of origin; integrating them into the local community; and resettling them in a location different from their place of origin and place of displacement.⁹⁸ State intervention is also important in some situations relating to IDPs such as in the facilitation of employment opportunities, mediation of disagreements on property ownership, assistance in the reconstruction of homes that are damaged or destroyed from conflict, and reconciliation. Some of the efforts made by the Iraqi Government to address IDP related problems include the establishment of the Property Claims Commissions 2004 to resolve property claims for IDPs for the period between 1968 and March 2003. Moreover, through Decree 262 and Order 101, administrative support mechanisms were set up to help IDPs wishing to return to Baghdad.⁹⁹ Order 58 also supports IDPs in their return to Diyala Governorate. A number of national policies have also been adopted to address issues related to IDPs in Iraq. These include the National Policy on Displacement (Ministry of Displacement and Migration, 2008); the Iraq National Housing Policy (Ministry of Construction and Housing, 2010); and the Iraq National Development Plan for 2010 – 2014 (Ministry of Planning, 2010).¹⁰⁰

3.3 Public health and medicine

While the literature available on public health and medicine in relation to internal displacement in the Middle East is scarce, much of it is focused on mental health and psychosocial issues. A study by Tekeli-Yesil et al. compares the frequencies of some types of mental health problems among Syrian refugees in Turkey and IDPs in Syria. Study findings showed that aspects relating to resettlement, the context, and type of displacement are linked to mental health disorders. Study findings suggested that IDPs are more likely to benefit from trauma focused approaches, whereas refugees are likely to benefit more from psychosocial approaches.¹⁰¹

95 Ibid.

96 Majidi, N., & Tyler, D. (2018) *Domesticating the Guiding Principles in Afghanistan*.

97 Willner-Reid, M. (2016) IDPs in Afghanistan: A Confused National Glossary. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 35(4), 79-96.

98 IOM, (2019) *Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq. Four years in displacement*.

99 Van der Auweraert P, (2011) 'Displacement and National Institutions: Reflections on the Iraqi Experience', *Middle East Institute and Fondation pour le Recherche Strategique*, p6.

100 Ibid.

101 Tekeli-Yesil, S., Isik, E., Unal, Y., Aljomaa Almosa, F., Konsuk Unlu, H., & Aker, A. T. (2018) Determinants of mental disorders in Syrian refugees in Turkey versus internally displaced persons in Syria. *American journal of public health*, 108(7), 938-945.

The American Public Health Association has placed the health of refugees and IDPs as a public health priority. The most prevalent illnesses among Syrians include infectious disease and mental health problems.¹⁰²

The Syrian refugee crisis has created an added burden to the health systems of host countries. In Jordan, access to health care for Syrians is challenging due to financial issues and already pressured health systems. In Turkey, the Government has established migrant health centres with Turkish medical health practitioners, however, mental health specialists are few. In Syria, medical practitioners have mostly fled the country, and health facilities have also been bombed, leaving the country's critical infrastructure destroyed.¹⁰³

Moreover, the risk of psychiatric morbidity is higher among people who are affected by conflict. According to a study conducted in 2009, demographic aspects such as gender, age, and education were key factors that affected the mental health of refugees and other people affected by conflict. Other trauma and post-conflict related afflictions include; exposure to trauma and daily stressors such as; insecurity, lack of income-generating opportunities, and poor social support and private housing.¹⁰⁴

Tekeli-Yesil et al.'s study highlighted the importance of looking at the living conditions and post-migration experiences of Syrians living in countries of refuge. Moreover, study recommendations highlighted the importance of using trauma-focused approaches for to support IDPs. Meanwhile, the use psychosocial interventions were perceived as best suited for refugees, in order to enhance their recovery and coping strategies. The study also recommends integrating mental health services within the general health care system in order to increase response rate and avoid stigma. As important is the need to build the capacities (including language training) of mental health care professionals, so that they are culturally sensitive to the needs of Syrian refugees and are better able to communicate with them.¹⁰⁵

Another survey conducted in October 2017 on the mass influx of IDPs in the Governorate of Raqqa highlighted the impact of displacement in north east Syria. It showed that chronic morbidity rates among IDPs arriving in north east Syria between November 2016 and 2017 was up to five times higher than the rates prior to the war. Survey findings also showed that people fleeing areas affected by conflict in Syria have been highly exposed to violence. Moreover, mortality rate was highest among men aged 15-45, which is a common phenomenon in conflict affected countries, where morbidity rates are highest among fighting aged men.¹⁰⁶

Syria's health care system was relatively efficient compared to other Middle Eastern countries. However, after the Syrian conflict of 2011, around 38% of the country's local health facilities providing primary care have been targeted by the regime and destroyed.^{107,108,109, 110,111} Hospitals

102 Ben Taleb, Z., Bahelah, R., Fouad, F. M., Coutts, A., Wilcox, M., & Maziak, W. (2014) Syria: Health in a country undergoing tragic transition. *International Journal of Public Health*, 60(1), 63–72.

103 Ibid.

104 Bogic, M., Wheeler, J., Danish, J. (2005) Long-Term mental health of war-refugees; a systematic literature review. *BMC Int Health Hum Rights*; 15(1): 29.

105 Tekeli-Yesil, S., Isik, E., Unal, Y., Aljomaa Almosa, F., Konsuk Unlu, H., & Aker, A. T. (2018) Determinants of mental disorders in Syrian refugees in Turkey versus internally displaced persons in Syria. *American journal of public health*, 108(7), 938-945.

106 Checchi, F., & Roberts, L. (2005) Interpreting and using mortality data in humanitarian emergencies. *Humanitarian Practice Network*, 52

107 Ben Taleb, Z., Bahelah, R., Fouad, F. M., Coutts, A., Wilcox, M., & Maziak, W. (2014) Syria: Health in a country undergoing tragic transition. *International Journal of Public Health*, 60(1), 63–72.

108 Save the Children. (2014) A Devastating Toll: The impact of three years of war on the health of Syria's children. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <http://www.savethechildren.org/atf>

109 Economist. (2014) *After Paris, Syria's peace process limps on*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21678712-part-puzzle-after-paris-syrias-peace-process-limps>

110 PHR. (2015b, February). Syria's medical community under assault. S3.Amazonaws.com. Retrieved January 11, 2020, from https://s3.amazonaws.com/PHR_other/Syria's-Medical-Community-Under-Assault-February-2015.pdf

111 Sankari, A., Atassi, B., & Sahloul, M. Z. (2013) Syrian field hospitals: A creative solution in urban military conflict combat in Syria. *Avicenna Journal of Medicine*, 3(3), 84–86.

have also been targeted by rebel groups in cities such as Aleppo and Homs, and consequently resulting in a shortage of critical care and services. Moreover, it is estimated that up to 70% of Syria's health care practitioners have fled the country due to lack of security. Hence, much of Syria's health system is occupied by poorly trained medical practitioners, and also suffers from lack of financing, equipment and medicines.¹¹² The destruction of Syria's health system has had significant impacts on IDPs in the country. IDPs are at greater risk to negative health outcomes such as, infections and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), poor maternal child health, and mental health and trauma.¹¹³

112 PHR. (2015) Syria's medical community under assault. S3.Amazonaws.com. Retrieved January 11, 2020, from https://s3.amazonaws.com/PHR_other/Syria's-Medical-Community-Under-Assault-February-2015.pdf

113 Mooney, E. (2014) *The inside story: Internal displacement in Syria*. Fmreview.org. Retrieved January 12, 2020, from <http://www.fmreview.org/syria/mooney.html>

4. Conclusions

The data on displacement in the Middle East shows that there are significant numbers of people who are internally displaced by conflict.¹¹⁴ Moreover, research shows that more attention is needed on IDPs, as data on internal displacement in the Middle East is lacking, despite the fact that they are larger in number than refugees. The lack of disaggregated data on IDPs challenges the development of policies that are informed by evidence-based data. In light of this, greater efforts are needed to promote the production disaggregated data on internal displacement in the Middle East.

Much of the literature on IDP situations in the Middle East has focused on issues in the social sciences and legal issues. While there is significant research on gender and internal displacement, gaps remain on other vulnerable populations such as LGBT communities, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Moreover, approaching internal displacement through an intersectional lens is important to ensure that a more nuanced understanding of internal displacement and its impact on vulnerable populations.

As for the literature on law and policy in relation to internal displacement, it has highlighted protection gaps in existing regional and national policies, which challenge IDPs from achieving their rights and protecting them. Moreover, the role of 'political will' and 'state accountability' are also significant factors strongly associated to the actualisation of IDPS rights. Research has also shown how displacement can be politicised and used by states to gain power.

Moving forwards, greater efforts are needed to encourage states to ratify international human rights laws in order to ensure that the rights of IDPs are better protected. Legal frameworks at national levels need to be aligned with international human rights laws in order to ensure greater protection for IDPs. Moreover, participatory and inclusionary approaches are needed in the development of policies relating to displacement, so that they offer meaningful protection to IDPS. Future research should also reflect on gendered implications of policies on IDP women and girls and men and boys in the Middle East.

In the case of medical and health sciences, the literature has focused mainly on researching the mental health of IDPs. Research shows that the health needs of IDPs are often disregarded. Few studies have looked at other health risks associated to displacement. Moreover, with the current Covid-19 pandemic taking the global and regional forefront, and reduced funding directed towards the WHO, focus on research relating to Covid-19 and its impact on IDPs is needed, and particularly through an intersectional lens.

Collaboration between IDPs, governments, humanitarian organisations and academics is needed to find solutions for IDPs, and to better understand the different and context specific challenges that they face. Moreover, GAD disaggregated data is necessary to inform policy making on IDPs, and an intersectional lens is needed to ensure that no one is left behind. Finally, this scoping study identifies key research themes on internal displacement in the Middle East, these include, big data on displacement; gender, masculinities, sexual identities and internal displacement; displacement data relevant for the Covid-19 pandemic; and durable solutions to internal displacement.

114 IOM, (2016) *Migration to, from and in the Middle East and North Africa. Data Snapshot*. Retrieved April 21, 2020, from https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/mena/Migration-in-the-Middle-East-and-North-Africa_Data%20Sheet_August2016.pdf.

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